

## 63. Reform of Municipalities.

MR. P. C. TANUMALAYAPERUMAL PILLAI (*Municipal Council, Nagercoil*) said that the subject of reforming the municipalities was not new to the Assembly. Municipal Councils like other similar institutions were modelled on British Indian institutions. But while the institutions in British India had developed since their inception, the municipalities in Travancore remained in the same stage as at their beginning. Municipal Councils had no control over their own finances although they had power to increase their revenue. They had no funds to attend to public needs. In British India similar institutions attended to medical aid, education, water supply, etc., with the help of loans issued by the Government. But no such thing was done in Travancore. The Trivandrum Municipality was having special treatment at the hands of the Government, while the mofussil municipalities were not having that amount of attention that was paid to the city municipality. Speaking of the Nagercoil municipality, the member said that supply of pure drinking water was a prime necessity. Absence of good water was the cause of several diseases and Nagercoil was not free from epidemics in any year on account of that. Pure water was scarce in Nagercoil especially in Vadivisvaram. In certain places water could be had only by sinking deep wells but even there, the water was brackish. The people depended solely on the Parakkai *kal* and the two Neerazhi *kulam* tanks for drinking and bathing purposes. But sometimes the *kal* water failed and the water in the tanks was contaminated by the inflow of sewage water during the rainy seasons and the want of proper outlets to the tanks. The main reason for this contamination was the conversion into paddy fields of the Kottachan *kulam* which used to take in all the drainage water in olden days. Several resolutions had been passed for the inauguration of a water supply scheme but no scheme could be worked out for want of funds and consequently the people were put to much hardship and inconvenience. Good drinking water had to be obtained from wells in distant places. Some of these wells were in private properties and water would be obtained therefrom only with their permission and at their convenience. Nagercoil was the second municipality in the State in importance and its population was increasing day by day. The Government should therefore take up the question of water supply at an early date and do the needful in the matter.

Secondly, encroachments on *poramboke* lands in the Nagercoil town were on the increase. But the Municipal Council had no power to prevent or vacate such encroachments and the public were put to much inconvenience thereby. The control and conservancy of *porambokes* were vested in the Revenue authorities. There was much delay in disposing of *poramboke* cases and evicting the encroachers. The squatters took advantage of the delay and put up pucca buildings. On account of the improvements, the Government were in many cases obliged to assign the lands to the occupants. This was a hindrance to the development of the town. The control over *porambokes* should

therefore be vested in Municipal Councils and the connected plans and records handed over to them.

The departmental schools and hospitals should be handed over to Municipal Councils as in British India together with the necessary grants. The expenditure on this account will be reduced and the management and control made stricter.

The power of making appointments in the Municipal Councils was vested in the Presidents alone. This power was sometimes abused by the Presidents by making appointments against rules and justice. This power should therefore be vested in the Councils. If this could not be done, the Councils should be empowered to entertain complaints and appeals about appointments made by the Presidents. Further, the persons appointed in many cases were not duly qualified. To remedy this defect a Sanitary Test should be instituted and only those who passed this test should be appointed in Municipalities.

The power of electing the President and the Vice-President was vested in all the members of the Council including the official members. The official members could not be expected to take interest in the advancement of the municipalities as they were transferred frequently. The official members should therefore be deprived of their right of voting for electing the President and the Vice-President.

The Nagercoil town was much congested, especially the fishermen's quarters in Kottar. Their dwellings were crowded and insanitary. The need for removing the congestion and providing them with sanitary habitations had engaged the attention of the previous Dewans and the previous Presidents of the Council. The scheme of constructing a new street for them should be taken up without delay and their grievances redressed.

In the days of advancement and equality of rights of men and women, it was an anachronism that women should be denied the franchise for municipal election and the right of membership. This disability should be removed.

#### 64. Removal of Municipal Office bearers on "no confidence" motions.

MR. P. C. TANUMALAYAPERUMAL PILLAI (*Municipal Council, Nagercoil*) next spoke about the need for removing Presidents of Municipal Councils when they did not function properly. If they were appointed for a fixed term and could not be removed before that term, it was open to them to do as they liked and be indifferent to their duties for the public good. They could also enlist the support of some of the members and continue in office in spite of their indifference. The rules did not permit the members to remove such officers from their offices. It was but fair that the members who elected Presidents should have also the power to remove Presidents. In British India Presidents of Municipal Councils could be removed from their offices on "no confidence" motions moved and carried by the members